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L E T T E R

TO THE

Rev. Mr. *John Wesley*,

CONCERNING

HIS INCONSISTENCY
with himself.

Occasioned by the Publication of his Sermon,

Entitled,

THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.

*Rebuke them sharply, that they may be found in the
Faith. Titus i. 13.*

L O N D O N:

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the *Admiralty*. 1766.

[Price Six-Pence.]

L E T T E R

Rev. Mr. John W. Alden

HIS CONCERN
WITH HIMSELF

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A LETTER to the Rev.
Mr. *John Wesley*, &c.

Reverend Sir,

I HAVE read your late published Sermon, entitled, *THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS*; and with great Pleasure I observed that part of it, which treats of the Doctrine of the *IMPUTED RIGHTEOUSNESS OF CHRIST*; not only, because I thought you therein asserted and maintained the Doctrine in very explicit Terms; but chiefly, because I took it to be a publick Recantation of some Errors, which you had unhappily fallen into for some Years past. But when I found you therein declare, “that this “is the Doctrine which you have constantly “believed and taught for near eight and twenty “Years”; I confess I was no less surprized than I was before pleased; and being unable myself to reconcile it with many Things which you have published of late upon that Subject, I have here taken the Liberty of presenting you with a few Extracts from some of your late Works; and I have opposed to them some others from your Sermon and Hymns therein mentioned; which having the Appearance, at
B least,

least, of a Difference, not in Expression only, but in Sentiment also; I should be obliged to you if you would inform me, (if you can) how they may be reconciled one with the other. But if upon a Perusal thereof you should perceive and acknowledge there is a real Difference, I should be glad if you would let us know which are your real Sentiments, and those that you will for the future abide by. And lest you should have forgotten what you formerly wrote on that Subject; and in order to shew what *that* Mr. John Wesley's Judgment was upon this Head, whose Name stands prefixed to his Works; I have put down some Extracts from those also: From the whole of which it will be difficult, I apprehend, to determine, whether they are the Works of one, two, or three Mr. John Wesleys; if he be credited, who in his Sermon says, that he has been of the same Judgment for near eight and twenty Years.

The following are some Extracts from some of your former Works; by which it will appear, that you then believed and taught, that both the active and passive Obedience of Christ were imputed to a Believer for his Righteousness; and that Faith was no more than a Hand to receive it.

“ As Adam's first Unrighteousness, the first Sin he committed, is communicated to Men, and made theirs by Imputation; and not only so, but by inherency also, (for it has bred in them original Sin) after the same Manner THE RIGHTEOUSNESS that CHRIST WROUGHT, is made ours by Imputation, and this imputative Righteousness of CHRIST worketh a Righteousness which is inherent in us.”——

“ Though

“ Though CHRIST was a Man without Sin in himself, yet our Sin was imputed to him, and he was by GOD reckoned as a Sinner ; and then he kills him, putting our Curse upon him ; so to us that are free from Righteousness, CHRIST is made Righteousness ; so that GOD looks on us as if we had performed PERFECT RIGHTEOUSNESS ; and when that is done he saves us.” —

“ This is the only Way now by which Men shall be saved, the Work is already done on CHRIST’s part ; *there* is the Righteousness that GOD hath prepared, which is therefore called *the Righteousness of GOD*.” —

“ CHRIST came into the World and died, that he might WORK RIGHTEOUSNESS and make Satisfaction to GOD : So that you have nothing to do for the first attaining of it, but to receive it by Faith.” —

“ Why should you look for Righteousness in yourselves ? The Work of Faith is to take THAT RIGHTEOUSNESS that is none of your own ; there is nothing at all else required. I say all that Faith has to do, is only to take from CHRIST THAT RIGHTEOUSNESS that we want ourselves. — It is Faith only that makes us Partakers of A RIGHTEOUSNESS to justify us, because we ourselves have it not.” —

“ You now see the Reasons, why it is by Faith only, that the RIGHTEOUSNESS of CHRIST is made *ours* to Salvation.” —

“ For neither our inward nor outward Righteousness is the Ground of our Justification. Holiness of Heart as well as Holiness of Life, is not the Cause, but the Effect of it. The sole Cause of our Acceptance with GOD is the RIGHTEOUSNESS and DEATH of CHRIST, who *fulfilled God’s Law*, and *died* in our stead.” —

“ This is an honour to CHRIST, to attribute so much to HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS, that being *cloathed* therewith, we can holdly break through the Fire of GOD’s Justice, and all those terrible Attributes, when we see them all, as it were, satisfied fully in CHRIST ; for CHRIST with his Righteousness, could go through the Justice of GOD, having satisfied to the full *for us*. And we being *cloathed* with this HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS and SATISFACTION, may go through too.” *

“ Join Earth and Heaven to bless
The LORD our Righteousness.
The Mystery of Redemption this,
This the Saviour’s strange Design ;
Man’s Offence was counted *his*,
Ours his Righteousness Divine.” —

* The above Extracts are taken chiefly from the *Christian Library*.

" In him complete we shine,
His *Death*, his *Life* is mine :

Fully am I justified,
Free from Sin, and more than free,
Guiltless, since for me he *died*,
Righteous, since he *liv'd* for me." —

" Grant this, O LORD ; for thou hast dy'd,
That I might be forgiven ;
Thou hast the Righteousness supply'd,
For which I merit Heaven." —

" Let Faith and Love combine
To guard your valiant Breast ;
The Plate be Righteousness divine,
Imputed and *Imprest*." —

" When from the Dust of Death I rise,
To claim my Mansion in the Skies ;
Ev'n then shall this be all my Plea,
Jesus hath *liv'd* and *dy'd* for me." —

" Jesu thy Blood and Righteousness
My Beauty are, my glorious Drefs." —

" My righteous Servant and my Son
Shall each believing Sinner clear,
And all who stoop t'abjure their own,
Shall *in* his Righteousness appear."

The Extracts which follow ; are from some of
your late Works, and the Sermon, entitled, THE
LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.

Of what is meant by the RIGHTEOUSNESS OF
CHRIST, and of the IMPUTATION thereof.

(LATE WORKS.)

(SERMON.)

" The Question in precise Terms is this, whether the Faith of him that truly believes in CHRIST, or the Righteousness of CHRIST himself, that is, his Obedience to the moral Law, be that which God imputes to a Believer, for Righteousness in his Justification ; so that he that believes, is constituted and made

CHRIST did all Things well. In every Word of his Tongue, in every Work of his Hands, he did precisely the Will of him that sent him. — All he acted and spoke was exactly right in every Circumstance : The whole and every part of his Obedience was complete. He fulfilled *all Righteousness*."

as

" But

as perfectly, as legally righteous, as CHRIST himself is; the Justified and the Justifier, both being righteous with the selfsame Righteousness, only the justified wears it by Imputation, the Justifier by Inherency. — That the Scriptures no where countenance any such Imputation of the Righteousness of CHRIST, I trust to make manifest in this Discourse.

That the active Obedience of CHRIST, his fulfilling the moral Law, was never intended by GOD to be that Righteousness where-with we are justified may be further demonstrated, &c.

The Righteousness of CHRIST is precisely fitted to the Person and Calling of a Mediator. — Therefore it cannot be imputed to any other Man for his Righteousness."

Treatise on Just. Pa. 4. 5. 27. 57.

"I cannot prove that it was requisite for CHRIST to fulfill the moral Law in order to his purchasing Redemption for us. — By his Sufferings alone the Law was satisfied. — The Satisfaction made by the Death of CHRIST was unquestionably sufficient to obtain both our full Pardon and final Happiness."

Letter to Mr. Hervey.

"So that you see one main Reason why we deny the IMPUTATION of CHRIST's Righteousness. — A Third Reason against this Imputation of CHRIST's Righteousness, is, there is no necessity or occasion for it. — If our Right and Title to Heaven be by Imputation of CHRIST's

Right-

"But his Obedience implied more than this: It implied not only doing, but suffering: Suffering the whole Will of GOD, from the Time he came into the World, till he bore our Sins in his own Body upon the Tree. — This is usually termed the passive Righteousness of CHRIST, the former his active Righteousness. — And it is with regard to both these conjointly that JESUS is called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS. — To all Believers the Righteousness of CHRIST is imputed.

Sermon, Pa. 13. 14.

"I no more deny the Righteousness of Christ than I deny the Godhead of Christ. — Neither do I deny IMPUTED RIGHTEOUSNESS. — I always did and do still continually affirm that the Righteousness of CHRIST is imputed to every Believer. — But when is it imputed? When they be-

Righteousness, then doth God give the Grace of Adoption in vain. — Such an Imputation of the Righteousness of CHRIST as is pleaded for, wholly cuts off the Necessity of Repentance. —

A sixth Reason *against* such an Imputation of the *active* Obedience of CHRIST is, it takes away the Necessity of his Death. — To hold an Imputation of the *active* Obedience of CHRIST amounts to no less than an abrogation of his Death."

Treatise Page 60. 64. 72. 73.
74. 116.

believe, in that very Hour the Righteousness of CHRIST is *theirs*."

Serm. Pa. 26. 15.

" There are hundreds, yea thousands of TRUE BELIEVERS, who never once thought one way or other of CHRIST's fulfilling all Righteousness in their Stead. I personally know many who to this Hour have no Idea of it."

Letter to Mr. Hervey.

" Faith and the Righteousness of CHRIST are inseparable. For if he (viz. the Believer) believes according to Scripture, he believes *in* the Righteousness of CHRIST. There is no TRUE FAITH, that is, justifying Faith, which has not the Righteousness of CHRIST for its Object."

Serm. Pa. 15.

" The whole Generation of Disputers for that Imputation, which we *oppose*, interpret the Phrase, of *having the Righteousness of CHRIST imputed*, by being *clothed with this Righteousness of CHRIST*, or, *with the Robes of his Righteousness*."

Treat. Pa. 58.

Jesu thy Blood and Righteousness

My Beauty are, my glorious Drefs.

" But is not a Believer *invested* or *clothed* with the Righteousness of CHRIST? undoubtedly he is."

Serm. Pa. 23.

" We obey in order to our final Acceptance through CHRIST's Merits. And in this Sense, by obeying we lay a good Foundation

" All the Blessings I enjoy, all I hope for in Time and Eternity, are given wholly and solely for the Sake of what CHRIST has

Foundation, that we may attain eternal Life." has *done* and *suffered* for me."

Serm. Pa. 34.

Letter to M. Hervey.

Of Faith being imputed for Righteousness.

" God doth not require of us the Righteousness of CHRIST for our Justification. — That which he requires of us for this purpose, is, our Faith in CHRIST himself, not IN THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF CHRIST."

Treat. Pa. 11.

" Faith is imputed for Righteousness, to every Believer; namely, Faith IN THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF CHRIST."

Serm. Pa. 23.

" To say that Faith, or believing, is imputed for Righteousness, but to mean, that it is not Faith but the Righteousness of CHRIST that is imputed; must needs argue the Speaker's Design to be; that his meaning should not get out at his Mouth. — That Faith which is imputed for Righteousness is his; (viz. the Believer's) that is, somewhat that may truly and properly be called his, before such Imputation of it be made unto him: which cannot be said of the Righteousness of CHRIST. —

Therefore by Faith, which is here said to be imputed, cannot be meant the Righteousness of CHRIST. — The Faith which is said to be imputed to Abraham for Righteousness, is Faith properly taken, and not the Righteousness of CHRIST apprehended by Faith."

Treat. Pa. 12. 13. 18.

" Neither

" But do not you put Faith in the room of CHRIST or of his Righteousness? By no means. I take particular care to put each of these in its proper Place. The Righteousness of CHRIST is the whole and sole Foundation of all our Hope. It is by Faith the Holy Ghost enables us to build upon this Foundation. GOD gives this Faith. In that Moment we are accepted of GOD: And yet, not for the Sake of that Faith, but of what CHRIST has *done* and *suffered* for us."

Serm. Pa. 15.

" There

“Neither is the Righteousness of CHRIST the OBJECT of Faith as *justifying*, nor doth the Scripture, where it speaks of Faith as *justifying*, make the least mention, or give the least Intimation of such a Thing.”

Treat. Pa. 17.

“There is no true Faith, that is *justifying* Faith, which hath not the Righteousness of CHRIST for its OBJECT.”

Serm. Pa. 15.

Therefore,

“For Christ’s Sake, and for the Sake of the immortal Souls which he has purchased with his Blood, do not dispute for the particular *Phrase*, THE IMPUTED RIGHTEOUSNESS OF CHRIST: it is not scriptural. --- THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF CHRIST is an Expression which I do not find in the Bible. — To say the Righteousness which justifies us is already wrought out, is a crude unscriptural Expression. — This Mode of Expression is always dangerous; often fatal. — It has done immense Hurt. — The nice metaphysical Doctrine of Imputed Righteousness, leads not to Repentance but to Licentiousness. — This Doctrine makes the HOLY ONE OF GOD the Minister of Sin.”

Letter to Mr. Hervey.

“Doth not this Way of speaking naturally tend to make CHRIST the Minister of Sin? For if the very personal Obedience of CHRIST be mine the Moment I believe, can any Thing be added thereto? On this Scheme then are not the holy and unholy on the same Footing?”

Theo. on imput. Righteousness.

“We no more deny the *Phrase* than the Thing. — I allow you to use what Expressions you chuse, and that a thousand times over. — I myself frequently use the Expression in question, IMPUTED RIGHTEOUSNESS. — I would address myself to you who *violently oppose* these Expressions, and are ready to condemn all that use them as Antinomians. But is not this bending the Bow too much the other Way? Why should you condemn all who do not speak just as you do? Why should you quarrel with them for using the *Phrases* they like, any more than they with you for taking the same Liberty. — And why should you be angry at an Expression? “O it has been abused;” and what Expression has not? However, the Abuse may be removed, and at the same time the Use remain.”

Serm. Pa. 35.

If the Trumpet give an uncertain Sound, who shall prepare himself to the Battle? says that consistent Writer, the Apostle Paul, 1 Cor. xiv. 8. Never surely were Words more applicable to any one than these to Mr. Wesley: the Uncertainty of the Sound of whose Trumpet evidently appears by the foregoing Extracts. How, Sir, is it possible for the People under your Care, any more than for others who only hear you preach occasionally, to tell what your real Principles are? Or how can they follow a Leader successfully, whose Commands are so very contrary? If you know of any way to reconcile these Contradictions, you will do well to communicate it to the World; that People may be less puzzled than they usually are, when they hear your uncertain Sounds. Do there not appear (I appeal to yourself, Sir) most flagrant Contradictions, and palpable Inconsistencies in these Extracts; not in Appearance only, but in Reality; not barely in Expression, but in Sentiment also? For if Words convey any Meaning at all, and if it be possible for that Meaning to be contradicted by Words, I think it is done effectually above in many Places.

I apprehend it is no Disparagement for a Man in esteem for Wisdom and Knowledge, to change his Mind, (when he is convinced of an Error, from pre-conceived Notions and Opinions which are wrong, to those that are right: and if Mr. Wesley had been content

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with

with doing only so ; no thinking Person, I believe, would have condemned him for it : but for one, who can talk much about *Perfection*; yet, change from wrong to right, and from right to wrong again ; who can say and unsay, assert and contradict, oppose every one, and himself to ; surely what such an one says is not much to be depended on.

In your Sermon you make this strange Declaration, “ that this is the Doctrine which “ you have constantly believed and taught for “ near eight and twenty Years.” *Strange*, I call it, after your wavering in your Notions so much as you have done : and when you preached that Sermon, you further declared, “ that this is the same Doctrine which Mr. “ Whitefield, Mr. Romaine, and Mr. Madan “ preach.” It would certainly be offering an Insult to Mr. Wesley’s Understanding, to suppose him ignorant of these worthy Ministers Opinionson the Doctrine of IMPUTED RIGHTEOUSNESS; and therefore, unnecessary to inform him, that the Treatise on Justification, which he published last Year, is no more to be reconciled with these Gentlemens Opinions, than with Mr. Wesley’s own former Opinions. For if I understand that Treatise at all, the principal Design of it is, to prove that the active Righteousness of CHRIST, or his Obedience to the moral Law, is no part of a Believer’s justifying Righteousness; that it was only necessary to qualify CHRIST for the Mediatorial Office,

Office, as he could not otherwise be either, the great High Priest, or the Lamb without Blemish, and without Spot : that this Righteousness is no other Way imputed to a Believer, than as it was available to the rendering his Sacrifice efficacious in satisfying divine Justice, and purchasing or meriting the Pardon of his Sins ; and that the Believer's Faith, *properly taken*, is imputed to him for Righteousness. Now need you, Sir, be told that these Men, whose Judgment on this Head you would fain persuade the World you are of, differ as widely from these Notions as the East is from the West ? are you really ignorant that they maintain, that both CHRIST's active and passive Obedience, as making one glorious, perfect Righteousness, are imputed to a Believer ; that the one absolves him from Guilt and Condemnation, the other entitles him to Life eternal : that being invested with this spotless Robe, God the Father sees no Spot in him : but accepts him and loves him as tho' he had never sinned. Now, Sir, who are we to believe ? *That* Mr. John Wesley, who in his Sermon says, " he has constantly believed and " taught that the active and passive Obedience " of CHRIST was our alone justifying Righteousness ; " or shall we believe *that* Mr. John Wesley, who has been for eight and twenty Years preaching and writing against CHRIST's Righteousness being imputed at all ?

There is an excellent Passage in the late mentioned Treatise, which I think well worth transcribing; it is this “ It is often seen, that
 “ when Men have unadvisedly embraced an
 “ Opinion, seeming in their Eye a lovely
 “ Truth, and did not at first, before they were
 “ wedded to it, apprehend what harsh Consequences it had attending it, they *shift every*
 “ *way* to quit themselves of that dishonourable Charge wherewith they find themselves
 “ incumbered.” — This, if I mistake not, is Mr. Wesley’s Case, and has been his Practice for some time past: What sorry Shifts, what mean Evasions, what twisting and torturing of Words and Sentences; and what vile Perversion of Scripture, is he forced to have recourse to, in order to make his Works have the least Appearance of Consistency; and after all (how unfortunate!) every attentive Reader must esteem him an inconsistent Man still. One and all of these Ministers just now mentioned I am sure do. With regard to your own People (those in connection with you I mean) the Case is the same: for on your Preaching and publishing this Sermon, some were offended, and thought you made too large Concessions to your Opponents; and even gave up the Point to them: Others told you, (you must needs remember it, Sir) that if you had always preached such Doctrine, your Chappels would not have been deserted so much as of late they had

had been, and your People would have had no occasion to go else where to hear; and further, that if they but mentioned, *Imputed Righteousness*, in their private Meetings, they were sure to be told, of late, that they were Antinomians. Now these Things, at the same time that they discover a Difference in Opinion amongst your own People, (which I do not think it is in your Power wholly to prevent) are a sure Proof that both Parties think you vary greatly in your Opinions. Others who read your Works, and hear you only now and then, think you the most inconsistent and inconstant Man living. Now, Sir, are all Fools? can every body be mistaken? Have all lost their Understandings and Judgments? Or if they are all mistaken, and you are really a *very consistent Man*, notwithstanding all that People think and say of you; and have held and maintained the same Principles for these eight and twenty Years; what a pity it is that you should be so unhappy in your Expressions, that tho' you always mean the same Thing, your Words should convey such very different Ideas to your Hearers. Would it not be adviseable for Mr. Wesley, and would it not save him a great deal of Pains, which he is now obliged to be at, in endeavouring to convince Men of their mistaken Opinions concerning him; if he studied Perspicuity of Style a little more,

and

and endeavoured to express a little more clearly what he really means?

Sometimes Mr. Wesley shews a great Veneration for the Scriptures, by disputing with those who do not use the very Words of them in their Writings. *The Righteousness of CHRIST*, he says, “ is an Expression which he cannot find in the Bible :” but he has been told that it is to be found in 2d Pet. i. 1. and therefore he will be silent, I should imagine, for the future about it. And I cannot help wishing, that Mr. Wesley had been a little more careful himself, when speaking of the same Thing, to use Expressions which come nearer to the Language which the Holy Ghost teaches : if he had been as cautious himself herein as he advises others to be, he would scarce have ventured to call in his Sermon, *THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF CHRIST, a Human Righteousness*. Do you find this Expression in the Scriptures, Sir? Is this Language any where countenanced in them? Is not the Blood of CHRIST called, *THE BLOOD OF GOD*; and the Righteousness of CHRIST, *THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD*? In your former Works, you tell us, that *the Righteousness which saveth us, is both prepared, and wrought by GOD, and is therefore called, the Righteousness of GOD*. How derogatory then must it be to the Honour of the Person who wrought it, to call it a *Human-Righteousness*; when

when he is God over all. blessed for ever? Surely “ this mode of Expression is always dangerous, *if not* often fatal ;” as it conveys an Idea by no means adequate to the Value and Dignity of the Thing itself. As the human Nature of CHRIST never had any Existence but in union with the divine ; I humbly conceive, no Action which he performed while upon Earth, can properly be called a *human* one ; every one being the Action of GOD as well as Man. This Mr. Wesley may probably say, he does not deny : and if he does not I think he cannot justify the Expression in question. Was the Righteousness of CHRIST a mere human Righteousness, you might dispute against the Imputation of it, if you pleased ; for me ; unless I was the only Person that it was to be imputed to ; for it could be of no Advantage to more than one, I am pretty confident. However, if we have a little Patience, perhaps Mr. Wesley may clear up this Matter, as he did some time ago the Doctrine of Imputed Righteousness ; by giving us his THOUGHTS on it.

As a Proof of your Disingenuity in endeavouring to explain away the Meaning of Expressions, when your Opinions are altered, I shall only produce your Comment upon your own Words : (viz.)

Jesu thy Blood and Righteousness,
My Beauty are, my glorious Dress.

“ That

“ That is, (say you in your Sermon,) for
 “ the Sake of thy active and passive Righteous-
 “ ness. I am forgiven and accepted of God.”--

What a Comment is here ! What a fine E-
 lucidation of the Text ! Does this explain at
 all the Meaning of the Expression, *the Right-
 eousness of CHRIST being the Believer's Dress?*
 This only explains the *Effects* or *Consequence*
 of his having on this Robe ; in allusion, no
 doubt, to an ancient eastern Custom ; which
 Mr. Wesley must be well acquainted with ;
 and knows that without having the Robe *on*
 him, no Person could be admitted or accepted
 as a Guest. But Mr. Wesley was aware, that
 if he had given this Meaning, (which I really
 believe to be his own, when he wrote the a-
 bove Lines) it would imply an Imputation of
 the *active Obedience* of CHRIST in that very
 Sense, which that “ whole Generation of Dis-
 puters” contend for, which Mr. Wesley, in
 his Treatise on Justification, published last
 Year, publickly and plainly declares he op-
 poses.

Alas ! Alas ! What fruitless Pains has Mr.
 Wesley taken ? how has laboured again and
 again in his Sermon to persuade us ? “ that a
 “ Difference in Expression by no means im-
 “ plies a Difference in Sentiment : that dif-
 “ ferent Men may mean the very same Thing,
 “ and yet express their meaning in very dif-
 “ ferent Words : Nay, that it is not easy for the
 “ same

“ the same Persons, when they speak of the
 “ same Thing at a considerable distance of
 “ Time, to use exactly the same Expressions.”

It may be so: and we see very plainly to what all this would tend. But suppose now, that I was to point Mr. Wesley to that glorious Luminary in yonder Heavens, whose bright Effulgence constitutes the Day; and was to tell him very gravely, that *that* resplendent Orb sends forth or causes that Light by which we see the Objects around us: Suppose also, that to morrow, (or eight and twenty Years hence, it matters not) I was to tell him as gravely, that it sends forth nothing but Darkness: and then in order to make my Assertion good, I was to have recourse to the merest Chicanery and jesuitical Sophistry; to prove, that though the Expressions were different, they meant the same Thing: that Darkness might be made appear to signify Light, and Light Darkness. What reply would Mr. Wesley make to this? Or what would he think of me for so doing? Would he not conclude, either that I was a Madman; or that I thought him a Fool? Well, but what then? Mr. Wesley may be ready to say: How is this any ways applicable to me? The Proof! the Proof! that it is so.—Please to cast your Eye, Sir, on the foregoing Extracts, and you will find Proofs enough: for notwithstanding it is a Commodity, which Mr. Wesley deals but little in, when he opposes any one; yet he

has been very liberal with his Proofs of his own Inconsistency and Self-contradictions; even enough to satisfy the most covetous Disposition. What an excellent Person must he be, to preserve People from unsettled Notions in Religion!—But perhaps, Mr. Wesley may take the Advantage of me here, by replying; “who so proper to preserve others from unsettled Notions, as he that has had large Experience and great Exercise that way himself?” If Mr. Wesley had given us any reason to think he is at length established, and that on any right Notions; I should readily acknowledge him to be duly qualified for that Office: but he has not given us the least Proof of that yet. Of the same Mind for near eight and twenty Years! say you?—You must have wrote and talked much in your Sleep then during that Time, (which we do not reckon a Man accountable for;) or somebody must have made very free with your Name in many Publications.

Surely, Sir, the *Pope* himself acts not more arbitrarily over the Understandings of his blind, bigotted Votaries, in requiring them to believe, against Facts, Sense and Reason, his Holiness's pretended Infallibility; than *you*, in requiring any of your Devotees to believe, contrary to all the Evidence, which a Person endued with but a common Understanding would require, to be convinced of the contrary;

that

“ that you have constantly believed and taught
 “ the same Doctrines for near eight and twenty
 “ Years.” Will your saying, “As to the Doctrine
 “ we are agreed,” satisfy a Person, who sees
 and knows your violent Opposition to them
 you pretend to be agreed with, that it is
 really so? Whence then are those penny and
 two-penny Pamphlets, which lift up their di-
 minutive Heads in bold defiance of almost all
 the chief Doctrines of Grace, and of every
 sound Defence thereof that is published? But
 I would have Mr. Wesley know that those
 glorious Doctrines, which he has been for
 Years opposing, defy all his weak Efforts and
 vain Attempts to overthrow them: that like
 an impregnable Fort, they mock every Attack
 from his Artillery; and are not to be battered
 down and demolished with ten Thousand of
 his *penny or two-penny Pop-Guns*, discharged
 with all the Pellets, which all the Paper will
 furnish him with, that he has *pressed* into his
 Service for that Purpose.

Perhaps, Sir, you are by this Time some-
 what surprized at the Liberty, which I, a
 Stranger, take with you, in speaking so
 plainly. I love plain dealing, Sir, and there-
 fore must be plainer still; and tell you what I
 really think to be the Cause, in a great mea-
 sure, of your strange, inconsistent Conduct.
 SELF, Sir, SELF is uppermost; VAIN SELF
 will not suffer you to acknowledge your Er-
 rors, when you are convinced of them, (for

I have scarce so much Charity as to think you are ignorant of them in many Respects.) VAIN SELF prompts you to twist, and twine, and turn about; and to take a great deal of Pains; and yet to no other purpose, but to convince the World that you really are in the wrong, and to involve yourself in still more inextricable Difficulties: which the foregoing Extracts abundantly evince. For what Man in his Senses, (unless he has the Art of reconciling *Irreconcilables*) would venture to declare they all mean the same Thing? Would it not be acting a more noble and ingenuous Part, to confess to the World, that you were mistaken when you maintained such and such Things; and that your Mind is altered with respect to this or that Point? Would not such a Conduct be a more effectual or likely way to convince Mankind that your Designs and Intentions are upright, than by endeavouring to impose upon People's Understandings? For when you are detected therein, who will regard any thing you say? And would such an open ingenuous Conduct bespeak you a jot less perfect, than to act as you now do?

But give me leave, Sir, to tell you, what I humbly conceive to be the chief Cause of your falling into such dangerous Errors both in Principle and Practice. I make no doubt but it is owing to your opposing so vehemently, your rejecting so contemptuously, and treating so profanely those glorious Doctrines of FREE GRACE,

GRACE, upon which the Salvation of Sinners principally depends ; which are a Source of Comfort and Support to a believing Soul, when every other Source and Refuge fails : I mean GOD's everlasting Purposes of Love to lost Sinners ; together with the Stability of the Covenant of Grace, which is ordered in all Things and sure ; and is not left to the Free-will and Power of fallen Man, so that he, a poor weak Worm, may frustrate all the glorious Designs of the Omnipotent GOD therein, if he think fit.

Since you deny, reject, and despise these fundamental Truths of GOD, which are revealed so clearly in the Scriptures ; since you wilfully shut your Eyes against the clearest Light ; is it not just in GOD to suffer you to wander in the delusive Paths of Error, and to stumble upon the dark Mountains of Presumption ? When you rejected these leading Doctrines of FREE GRACE, you were under a Necessity of substituting something in their stead, to make your Scheme hang together at all : and from hence proceeds that numerous Swarm of *Arminian Heresies* which you have nourished and sent forth into the World. From hence sprung that fond Device, of suspending Man's final Salvation upon the attenuated Thread of his own Faithfulness to Grace given ; which is not capable of bearing its own, much less an immense Weight ; which is liable to be broke by every blast of Temptation ;

tion ; and, were it really the Case, no Man could possibly be saved. Hence arose your mean, disparaging Thoughts of CHRIST'S GLORIOUS RIGHTEOUSNESS, and your denying one peculiar Property of it, which is, that it will be the Believer's Righteousness to justify him at the last Day, as much as the first Moment he believed : for whosoever shall be found without this *wedding Garment* in that Great Day, (whatsoever else he may have to plead) will be *cast into outer Darkeness, where there is weeping and gnashing of Teeth*. And from hence also, as a natural Consequence of the former Error concerning the Righteousness of CHRIST, issued that perfect Master-piece of Arminian Delusion, the (Doctrine, was I going to call it, rather that) *strange Notion* of SINLESS PERFECTION in this Life : the dreadful Effects of which, if Mr. Wesley does not first shut his Eyes against Facts, and then cry he cannot see them ; he must have seen of late amongst his People, when the *Delusion* arrived at its Zenith, and then grew rampant. These are a few of the Errors, which your rejecting the beforementioned Doctrines has produced.

I really wonder, Sir, you are not covered with Shame and Confusion at the Thoughts of what you have wrote and spoke against one of those glorious Doctrines of Grace beforementioned ; I mean that of PREDESTINATION : a Truth, so self-evident upon the bare admission
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of the Being of a God, that it is impossible to deny it, without denying at the same Time some one or other of his essential Attributes. A Truth — demonstrable both from Scripture and Reason; Reason, I say; enlightened Reason; such as acts in Subordination to Revelation, and is the Handmaid of Faith. A Truth — which the Scriptures abound with such pregnant Proofs of, that he who runs may read; and which St. Paul in particular, asserts in such plain, direct, and positive Terms, that none can doubt of his meaning, without first supposing that, like Mr. Wesley, he says one thing and means another; or that he couches his meaning under such ambiguous Expressions, as to mean either the Thing he seems to express, or the direct contrary, as may happen to suit his Purpose best. A Truth — which has been cordially received and embraced in the Church of GOD in all Ages; which has stood the Attacks of all the Men of perverse Minds, who have opposed it, from the beginning; and which the Gates of Hell shall never prevail against. A Truth — which often yields such Peace and Stability to a Soul in a dark or tempted Hour, that many would utterly faint, if they did not hope assuredly, from his Faithfulness to his Covenant-Promises, to see again the Goodness and the Mercy of the LORD towards them, notwithstanding every present Discouragement. Therefore I think I might address you with
your

your own vehement Adjuration, with much more Propriety and Reason than you did Mr. Hervey, and say, “ For Christ’s Sake, and for “ the Sake of the immortal Souls which he “ has purchased with his Blood, do not dispute *against* this particular Doctrine.”

What mean you, Sir, by acting thus as a common Enemy to the People of GOD ; in robbing them (as far as in you lies) of such precious Truths, and blessed Privileges ? — It seems to me quite unaccountable, how you can oppose those Truths with such warmth, if you ever truly experienced the Power of converting Grace in your Heart. Have you ever seen in the Light of GOD’s Spirit that Mystery of Iniquity and Deceit that is within yours, and every human Heart ; altho’ renewed, in part, by Grace ? If you ever did see it in any strong Light, I know not how you can dream of resting your Salvation on your *own Faithfulness* ; or call Sins by the soft Name of Infirmities ; and talk so wildly about keeping the Law perfectly by Love, (that is, giving it its full Demands, according to its Spirituality and utmost Extent :) you would rather depend on the *Faithfulness* of a *Covenant-keeping* GOD, I should imagine ; would see the great Imperfection of your Love, and of all your own Graces and Performances ; and from a Sight and Sense thereof, be led to prize the precious atoning Blood, and perfect Righteousness of CHRIST, in a manner far different from

from what you now seem to do. I pray GOD, therefore, to enlighten you to see and feel your Disease more, that you may have less Confidence in the Flesh, and therefore walk more humbly with GOD.

Permit me to ask you, Sir, whether you have ever maturely considered the Consequences of your inconsistent Conduct, either with regard to yourself, or the People under your Care? your Conduct, with respect to your People, must be attended with very pernicious Consequences, I apprehend: for unless they have all abandoned their Understandings and Reason, they must necessarily perceive your unsettledness in your Principles; consequently your Usefulness, as a Minister, must be hindered greatly. As for those that are so attached to you, as to determine to receive all you say for Truth, and to follow you implicitly; they must needs be led into endless Mazes and Labyrinths, and be kept in continual Bondage: for how can it be expected that they should be settled in any Measure, who are led by such an unsteady Guide? The Arminian Husks with which you feed your Flock, can never yield any lasting Peace, or Stability to a Soul, 'tho' preached in the most consistent Manner; much less then, when what is preached to day is contradicted to morrow. I know you take the best Method you can, to keep your People from the Means of being undeceived; by confining them

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within your magick Circle, circumscribed around them, with this Motto — “ hitherto “ you may go but no further.”—And if any Thing be published which is calculated to convince your People of your Errors and Inconsistency ; the Command is,—“ read it not ; “ at least ’till I have answered it”—and then, if you think proper to deny the whole, their implicit Faith is called for by your, IPSE DIXIT, to all that you please to assert. Witness your Conduct on the Publication of the Letters written by the late Mr. Hervey : to which you thought proper to give a kind of an Answer, (that is, to deny all he had said :) in the Title Page of which you tell us, it is “ an Answer “ to all that is material in Letters published, “ &c. &c;” and we no sooner turn over a Leaf, but we find *that all* which was thought material in them, was what concerned Mr. *John Wesley*, and his Character. What? Sir, is there nothing material in those Letters, but what concerns you? Do you make the most conspicuous Figure in them? Do they not speak of one infinitely superior to any mortal Being? Is not the Person, the Character, and the Doctrine of the *most adorable* SAVIOUR, treated of, vindicated, and exalted therein? and dares such a Worm as Mr. Wesley put himself in competition with the GREAT JEHOVAH, and *his* Cause, (as if it must sink or swim with him) and say there is nothing material but what concerns him and his Character

rafter there? — Surely this is an unparalleled Instance of Pride, or Ignorance !

With respect to yourself, the Consequences will be much worse, I fear, than you apprehend. I presume you think yourself accountable to GOD for the Ministry which he has committed unto you ; and he being jealous of his Honour, will certainly vindicate it as to the Truths of his Word ; and will make those smart for it, some way or other, who, contrary to Light and Conviction, pervert the Meaning thereof, blend it with gross Error, or militate against its clearest Truths. Hath he not declared, that *if his Children forsake his Law, and walk not in his Judgments, if they break his Statutes, and keep not his Commandments ; (altho' his Loving-kindness he will not utterly take from them, nor suffer his Faithfulness to fail ; yet) he will visit their Transgression with a Rod, and their Iniquity with Stripes?* You must also have read, that some there are, who will finally be saved, yet *so as by Fire* ; who, by building with improper Materials upon the true Foundation, and by behaving frowardly in GOD's Covenant, lay in Store of Fuel for future fiery Trials : which I fear has been your Case ; and that if you repent not and do your first Works, the Lord will come and remove you out of your Place ; and extinguish your glimmering Light, in the utmost Disgrace.

Should Mr. Wesley be led to think me his Enemy, because I tell him the Truth, so plainly ; I must beg leave to assure him that he is much mistaken. No, Sir, *my Heart's desire and prayer to GOD for you is*, not only, *that you might be finally saved* ; but that you may be speedily reclaimed from your Errors and Inconsistency ; *be taught the Truth as it is in JESUS*, so that for the future, you may *not shun to declare the whole Council of GOD* to a lost World ; and that you may be an Instrument in his Hand of *turning many to Righteousness*. And in order that I might contribute my Mite of Assistance towards this desirable End ; I must beg leave, in the Spirit of Love, and with all humble Diffidence of myself, to offer you a Word of Advice.

And *first*, I would advise you to make a plain, open, ingenuous Confession of your past inconsistent Conduct, with respect to your saying and unsaying, together with all the Art and Sophistry which you have used, in endeavouring to reconcile Things that are diametrically opposite. *Secondly*, from this Moment forward, for ever forbear to open your Lips, or employ your Pen, against those scriptural Doctrines of FREE GRACE, usually distinguished by the Name of *Calvinistic* ; and pray, *earnestly* pray, that the *Spirit of Truth* may first deliver you from all Prejudice against, and then *lead you into, all Truth* ; so that you
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may *know it as it is in* JESUS: and being convinced of the Truth of those Doctrines, you may not only, for the future, forbear to oppose, but may *earnestly contend for, the Faith once delivered to the Saints.* Lastly, above all, beg of GOD to shew you your Heart, and to humble you for those Things which have been amiss in your publick Conduct; that notwithstanding he has justly suffered your Name to be reproached and contemned, you may prove by your future Conduct, that THE GRACE OF GOD triumphs over all the *Unworthiness of Man*; and that *all Things, even the Falls of his People, (although he sharply rebukes them for them) work together eventually for their Good.*

Before I close my Letter I have one Request to make, or rather to repeat, having mentioned it in the Beginning; which is, that, seeing almost every one is at a loss to know what your *real Principles* are in many respects, you will, so soon as an Opportunity offers, publish them in the most explicit Terms you possibly can. You know how to write clearly and intelligibly, when you have a mind; therefore by avoiding all ambiguous Expressions, (under which there may lurk a Reserve) let the World see that you can act fairly and honestly: and be assured it will be the most effectual Means of preventing future Contests about Words, Phrases, and Expressions.

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In the mean Time, let it be your constant Aim and Endeavour, Sir, and no less mine, that we may, living and dying, *be found in CHRIST, not having our own Righteousness which is of the Law, but the Righteousness which is of Faith*, even HIS TRANSCENDENT, MATCHLESS RIGHTEOUSNESS, as a spotless Robe to cover and adorn our naked Souls; that when the Top-stone of Salvation shall be brought forth, we may join with them, who shall shout, *Grace! Grace! only Grace! unto it.* That this may be your happy Lot and mine, is the ardent Desire, and the constant Prayer of,

Reverend Sir,

Your real Friend,

and humble Servant, &c.

ERRATA.

Page 9, line 30, add) after *Error*. P. 10, l. 7, read, *too*. P. 11, l. 23, read, *whom*. P. 12, l. 26, dele, *to*. P. 14, l. 9, read, *and*. Id. l. 17, read, *advises*. P. 15, l. 28, read, *produce only*.—These are the most material Errors of the Press, which the Reader is desired to correct.



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